

Minutes

Governor's Cabinet on Chronic and Long Term Care

Thursday, September 9, 2004

1:00 p.m.

Department of Labor and Training

1st Floor Conference Room

1511 Pontiac Avenue

John O. Pastore Center

Cranston, Rhode Island

Members in Attendance:

Corinne Calise Russo, Co-Chair, DEA; Jeff Grybowski, Co-Chair; Jane A. Hayward, OHHS; Adelita Orefice, DLT; Rollin Bartlett, DBR; Patricia A. Nolan, MD, DOH; Kathleen Spangler, MHRH; Ronald Lebel, DHS

Absent:

Beverly Najarian, DOA; Marilyn Shannon McConaghy, DBR

Department Representatives:

Jorge Garcia, Governor's Office; John Young, DHS; Kathy McKeon, DEA; Frank Spinelli, DHS; Michael Cronan, DEA; Michelle Mickey, DHS; Jeanne Hunter, DHS; Elaina Goldstein, URI

I. Opening Remarks

Corinne Calise Russo called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. She

announced that time would be allowed for participant comment. The August minutes were approved and seconded.

Corinne Calise Russo welcomed and introduced Jeff Grybowski, Co-Chair to address the group. Mr. Grybowski reiterated the comments the Governor made at the Press Conference addressing the closing of Hillside Nursing Home. The Governor ordered an internal review be conducted by the Office of Health and Human Services under the direction of Jane Hayward, the findings of which will be made public. The Governor plans to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the issues surrounding legislative and regulatory reform and the need for more human resources. Mr. Grybowski stated that he met with representatives from the Federal government and the Attorney General's office who are interested in working with State government on the complicated issues surrounding health care.

Public Comment

Corinne Calise Russo interrupted the agenda to accommodate Reed Cosper's schedule. Mr. Costner felt the closing of Hillside Nursing Home spotlighted the issues of Long Term Care. He focused on the lack of services available to the mentally ill patients after the elimination of psychiatric care at Eleanor Slater Hospital. Some of the displaced patients were placed in assisted living and/ or nursing homes facilities. These facilities lack the psychiatric care the mentally ill require; resulting in an Emergency Room crisis for

psychiatric care. Mr. Costner states mentally ill patients who are not geriatric patients should not be placed in a nursing home or assisted living. He would like the State to address the needs of mentally ill patients by reinstating psychiatric services at Eleanor Slater Hospital.

II. Working Group Reports

- **Long Term Care Strategic Plan – John Young**

John Young reported development of a drug discount program for people not covered by RIPAE. Discussions with DEA focus on proposals to identify a care sponsor network. Public comments are welcome in October with card issuance in November. The direct program implementation is scheduled for March 1. More information will be forthcoming in the next few weeks RFP.

- **Medicare Reform – Frank Spinelli**

Frank Spinelli stated the Medicare recipients are currently receiving the \$600 credit. The CMS fact sheet was received August 3 requesting comments be forwarded by the October 4 deadline. Issues being addressed are how programs get data; compliance; how to ensure a positive physician patient relationship and making sure patients are receiving the necessary medication. Frank reported as of January 2005 Medicare will cover the cost of preventive examinations and screening tests. DEA submitted a \$50,000 grant to AoA for an outreach to target the State's culturally diverse population.

Corinne Calise Russo stated that recipients of the \$600 prescription benefit under RIPAE are not signing up for the prescription card. Kathy McKeon informed the group that there are 38,000 RIPAE members and to date only 2,724 people out of the possible 10,000 to 15,000 low income people have signed up for the prescription card. The auto enrollment will remedy the situation.

- Aging and Disability Resource Center – Kathy McKeon**

Kathy McKeon reported building #79 on campus is slated as the site for the ADRC. The building renovations are part of bond issue #12.

Kathy informed the group that staff did select a marketing firm and is waiting for State purchasing to process. The ADRC website is in its 11th edition and will be up and running in one month. The website is downloading information from the DEA pocket manual.

Kathy announced the next meeting of the ADRC Advisory Committee is scheduled for September 22 at 3:00 p.m. at Network RI.

III. New Directions

Nursing Home Patient Safety Plan – An Overview – Patricia A. Nolan, MD, MPH

Dr. Patricia Nolan stated the closing of Hillside Nursing Home due to substandard care caused a shortage of nursing home beds and Alzheimer care in the community. As a result the Governor developed a Patient Safety Plan which Dr. Nolan outlined for the

group. The Governor will introduce legislation to require owner accountability; stronger authority to intervene on behalf of patients; state appointed safety monitor; powers of financial investigation and increased inspection resources. John Young stated the Attorney General has authority in the judgment of financial responsibility and suspects the AG has the responsibility for investigating criminal acts.

Jane Hayward commented that the area of solvency needs to be addressed by legislative changes. She stated that Dr. Nolan has outlined perspectives and points of view that raises the question of whether it is a regulatory or a statutory issue or is it both. Dr. Constantine commented the surveyors spoke to the health care professionals and during a survey they did promise to improve care deficiencies. Dr. Nolan finished the presentation and later Roberta Hawkins commented that unless we clearly admit what went wrong we won't be able to fix it. Jane Hayward responded that the government is aware of that and mistakes were made by the overseers and we must go forward.

Dr. Nolan stated HEALTH is not responsible for dealing with individual patient care. However, HEALTH will intervene on behalf of individual residents by communicating with their physicians and family decision makers when there are deficiencies in care or the facility is cited.

Dr. Nolan also expressed the need to partner with MHRH and to develop an enhanced ombudsman program to address individual complaints cited.

Discussion

Corinne Calise Russo stated that Jane Hayward, Jorge Garcia and members of DEA/DHS staff are forming a work group to explore ways to streamline the waiver process and satisfy the needs of patients on the waiting lists. John Young, Kathy McKeon and DEA are looking at options to present to the OHHS and the Governor's office.

Corinne Calise Russo expressed concern that the health care workforce will not satisfy the demands of an aging population given the 10 year projected need for long term care. She mentioned the efforts of Hope High School and area colleges beginning programs addressing the issue of working with the elderly and disabled.

Lita Orefice identified staff at DLT to develop a work group on how to begin to get people in the work force and how to improve conditions. She mentioned the possibility of DLT using federal funds for CNA training sessions at the Network RI facility. Lita Orefice also stated that the health care professions, nursing and CNAs, suffer from supply and demand and the retention gap. Corinne Calise Russo stated if direct care providers were on the same perceived professional scales as other health care personnel it would raise self esteem and make people value what they do.

IV. Public Comments

Bob Caffrey stated he was shocked at the CNA retention statistics and feels a comprehensive training is a key component to improving the workforce. Roberta Hawkins asked why CNAs are licensed and not working? She states 3 reasons, money, lack of respect and too many sick residents per licensed health care worker.

Kathy Lee, RI Adult Day Care, expressed concern that agencies had not received their legislative grants which is causing a hardship for the agencies. She also mentioned the RIPTA cuts would have a negative affect.

Corinne Calise Russo stated that a message from the Governor reassured DEA that community agencies would receive their legislative grants.

V. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Others in Attendance:

Ann Gardella, Helene Zuffoletti, Bob Caffrey, Christopher Novak, Reed Cosper, Rev. Paul L. Bliss, Kelly Lee, Paula Parker, Kathleen Kelly, Roberta Hawkins, Christopher Novak, Russell Gifford, Herbert Constantine, M.D., Kathleen Connell, Christine Rancourt

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Slemon

Assistant to the Director

Department of Elderly Affairs